



Yosemite Fire Management Plan

What is this project about?

Since 1968, the National Park Service has recognized that fire plays an essential role as a natural process in ecosystems. Since 1970, Yosemite has had several fire management plans in an attempt to restore fire to its necessary role.

The *Final Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* updates the existing 12- year- old fire management plan and complies with the National Fire Policy. The plan originally proposed four alternatives for managing wildland and prescribed fire; the overarching goal was to improve the park's ability to restore areas to natural conditions while protecting life and property in developed areas and high visitor- use locations.

Why update the Fire Management Plan?

An updated fire management plan is needed to respond to the requirements of 2001 Federal and National Park Service Fire Management policies. These policies state that every national park with burnable vegetation must update their existing fire plan. The *Final Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* expresses the chosen alternative for implementing national fire policy in Yosemite National Park and the El Portal Administrative Site.

This plan includes adjustments in fire management strategy to accomplish resource management goals, protect the developed areas within the park, and provide for improved public and firefighter safety. Other important components of the *Final Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* are restoration of fire as an ecological process, as well as the development of partnerships with neighboring communities, local and state governments, and other agencies to reduce the risk posed by unwanted wildland fire.

What final alternative was chosen?

Alternative D—Multiple Action

This is the environmentally preferred alternative; it causes the least environmental damage and best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources. Under this alternative, prescribed fire and passive reduction techniques would be used in all areas to quickly and effectively achieve protection, fuel reduction, and ecosystem restoration goals. More aggressive treatment strategies would be used in developed areas if needed. Managed wildland fire (lightning- ignited fires) would be allowed to burn where practicable, under specific conditions.

Public Participation

The *Final Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* has been developed with consideration of the thoughts expressed by concerned citizens during the planning process. Park staff will continue to listen to concerns and issues that arise during implementation of the fire management program and revise the program accordingly to ensure attaining the National Fire Plan objectives.

The *Final Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* is the product of the discussions with the public as well as local, state and federal cooperating agencies and park fire and resource management staff. The Yosemite fire management program is not new. It has benefited from over thirty years of implementation and refinement, research and monitoring, learning and doing. Revision processes, such as this one, are a chance to revisit old issues, discuss procedures, make improvements, foster communication with the public, and sort through the diverse public needs that drive fire management decisions.

To those who have contributed comments, attended public meetings, and met with us—thank you. Please remain involved as we continue implementation of the Yosemite Fire Management Plan.